

Post-Event Summary Report

Name of Event: Focus Group for the Ka'u Partners in Eldercare
Community Council

Date of Event: December 21, 2004

Location of Event: Pahala Senior Center, 96-1183 Holei Street
Pahala, Hawaii 96777 (District of Ka'u)

Number of Persons attending: 19

Sponsoring Organization(s): Hawaii County Office of Aging
An Area Agency on Aging

Contact Name: Pauline Fukunaga

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Priority Issue #1:

Access to Affordable, High Quality Services

Barriers:

- Limited access to comprehensive health care in rural areas
- Constant turnover of physicians
- Low population density and large geographic area (rural) vs high population density and small geographic area (urban)
- Long distance to travel for services
- No surgical services
- Very limited dental services
- No local access to eye doctor
- No Ob/GYN doctors (obstetrics and gynecologists)
- Limited mental health services
- Inconsistent Access to 911 due to lack of phone/cell phone service in many areas
- No proper equipment for Emergency Care

Proposed Solutions:

- Recruit physicians who want to live in rural areas for the long-term
- Establish long-term contracts for physicians
- Provide housing for physicians
- Upgrade existing rural hospital facility(s) to be comparable to other hospitals
- Expand mobile dental care unit to include a larger rural area
- Work with local government agencies to designate acceptable areas for development of medical facilities

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Priority Issue #2:

Coordinated social and health services that give the elderly the maximum opportunity to age in place.

Barriers:

- Lack of facility(s)
- Lack of co-location of services
- Lack of facility(s) that are accessible for disabled
- Distance to services
- Distance between clients
- Large rural areas and low population density
- Transportation issues; variety of scheduling needs and small rider-ship

Proposed Solutions:

- Designate an existing facility as a Senior Center
- Construct a Senior Center that could also be used as a disaster shelter
- New construction developments should have community input
- Assure all existing facilities used by Seniors meet ADA requirements
- More local access to basic services
- Para-transit System
- Innovative program where individual providers (paid or volunteer) are prescreened and place in a pool to be available to riders who are also prescreened. Both providers and riders would have identification cards

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Priority Issue #3:

Planning and developing the built environment (e.g., homes, neighborhoods, roadways) to be optimally accommodating for the elderly

Barriers:

- Limited fresh water supply in rural areas
- Inadequate police force for rural areas
- Road Floods during rain creating emergency survival situation (*impedes emergency services*)
- Brush fire, car accidents can also close access roads

Proposed Solutions:

- Larger police force
- Resolve highway flooding problem
- Provide for alternate emergency routes

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Priority Issue #4:

Use of Information to Improve the Delivery, Administration, and Quality of Health Care Services

Barriers:

- Access to local-style lunches
- Access to local produce
- Contracted Meal Provider (bid process results in one major provider)
- Inconsistent meal participants
- Inflexible meal plan

Proposed Solutions:

- Local buyer of produce to coordinate purchase of produce
- Individual Nutrition Counseling
- More flexibility from provider for meal order
- Provide opportunity for fixed alternative meal

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